

# HARPSWELL *BULLETIN*

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News for Harpswell Residents & Property Owners from the Town Office – May 2007

Town Website: [www.harpswell.maine.gov](http://www.harpswell.maine.gov)

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## **Town Meeting March 2007 Update**

The 65-article 2007 Town Meeting warrant engaged voters for more than six hours on March 10, 2007 at Harpswell Islands School. The total municipal **budget** approved, exclusive of SAD # 75 and Cumberland County, was \$3,991,511. Although this is a 9.1% increase over 2006 appropriations, the voters authorized using \$155,000 from Municipal Revenue Sharing, \$1,610,000 from non-property tax revenues and \$240,000 from undesignated fund balance, leaving a total of \$1,986,511 to be collected from property taxes for the funding of municipal services. This net amount does not exceed the limit imposed by L.D.1. Increases occurred in debt obligations, employee benefits, snow removal, marine patrol contract, and facilities maintenance. Decreases occurred in contingency, capital reserves, road maintenance, recycling and transfer station operations, codes enforcement and legal. New budgeted items included \$135,000 for the purchase of a brush truck; \$50,000 as a contribution to the Holbrook Foundation; \$15,000 for an emergency services study; \$13,000 (to be combined with an existing \$7,431) for phase two of a water and septic study; \$6,000 for a salary survey; \$6,000 for hiring a lobbyist; \$5,000 for economic development purposes; \$5,000 for improving handicap-accessibility at voting sites; \$4,500 for additional insurance coverage for volunteer fire and rescue providers; and \$2,000 for planning and commemorating 250 years of the Town's incorporation in 2008.

With regard to **ordinances**, an extensive number of land use ordinance proposals were on the warrant this year. Notably, the Town voted down the adoption of international building codes and the establishment of rural and village districts. Also defeated were amendments to the Harbor and Waterfront Ordinance and an amendment to the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance regarding the expansion of non-conforming structures. All other ordinance amendments were passed including the adoption of an Emergency Management Ordinance. In **elections** the following candidates were elected to three-year terms: James Henderson as Selectman; Rosalind Knight as Town Clerk; Martha York as Tax Collector; Marguerite Kelly as Treasurer; and Dorothy Carrier as School Board Member. Robert Venard was elected to fill the remaining two years of the Road Commissioner's term. The two **referendum questions** passed by large margins—one terminated the withdrawal process from M.S.A.D. # 75, the other approved \$108,378 for Curtis Memorial Library.

## **Patriot's Day Storm**

On April 16, Harpswell endured extended periods of high winds, heavy rainfall and coastal flooding. The Town's Emergency Management Agent and its three volunteer fire and rescue departments performed admirably during this event. A significant number of downed power lines and trees throughout the Town created many potentially dangerous situations and left numerous residents without power for days. A Presidential declaration will enable Harpswell to seek FEMA reimbursement for costs related to clean-up and repair of public property. With regard to assistance for individual and businesses losses, there has yet to be a federal declaration issued. We continue to encourage individual and businesses that sustained uninsured losses to contact the Town Office.

## **Open Space Plan**

The Town will have two planning processes underway during the summer of 2007. In addition to the Mitchell Field planning process, the Conservation Commission will be working with the community to develop an Open Space Plan. The primary purpose of the Open Space Plan is to enhance and preserve the natural and scenic qualities of the Town's rural landscape while also allowing for future residential growth. This process will involve the creation of a vision statement and coordinated conservation strategy to protect key natural resources, critical scenic viewsheds and recreational areas. The process will be enhanced through meaningful citizen participation.

Did you know the Town has a 20-year old "Critical and Scenic Areas Map"? This map is currently used by the Planning Board in reviewing development proposals to preserve "scenic areas and open spaces" of Harpswell. *Public involvement and discussion* during the Open Space Planning Process will ensure that the Plan will continue to accurately depict the values of the community.

## **Become involved!**

**When: May 30 & July 9, 2007**

**Where: Harpswell Island School**

**Time: 6:30 pm**

For more information contact Town Planner Jay Chace at  
(207) 833-5771 or [jchace@town.harpswell.me.us](mailto:jchace@town.harpswell.me.us)

*Your involvement* will help to 1) establish which natural resources are among the priorities in Harpswell for preservation and enhancement; 2) identify appropriate measures for the preservation and protection of scenic areas and open spaces; 3) provide guidance for allocating limited resources; and 4) update Harpswell's 1987 "Critical and Scenic Areas" map. The Open Space Plan is dependent on *public involvement* to find a balance between future development and preservation of those characteristics that makes Harpswell a special place.

## **Grant Awards Totaling \$90,000**

**Failed Septic System Revolving Loan and Grant Program:** Harpswell has received preliminary word from Cumberland County that the Town has been selected to receive **\$65,000** of Community Development Block Grant funding. The grant money will be used to establish a revolving loan and grant fund for the replacement of failed septic systems. Together with \$50,000 of Town funds already approved by Harpswell voters, the Town is ready to launch its program to assist low to moderate income households with low-interest loans and/or grants for replacing failed septic systems. To learn more about this program, please contact Deputy Town Administrator Terri Sawyer at 833-5771.

**Emergency Services Study:** The Maine Municipal Bond Bank has awarded the Town **\$25,000** to fund an emergency services study. The Town intends to hire a qualified consultant to evaluate existing service levels as well as to evaluate the 20-year capital plan for vehicles submitted by the departments. Information gleaned will not only assist Harpswell in its decision-making regarding emergency services operations and capital needs, but it will also be shared with other governmental units that may learn from our undertaking.

## MITCHELL FIELD UPDATE

Since 2001, the Town has considered several proposals for future uses of Mitchell Field, but the Town's people have found that none of them seemed right for the site. This summer the citizens of Harpswell will have an opportunity to create a vision and develop a master plan for the future of Mitchell Field that embraces the community's hopes and aspirations.

This is a fresh start for the Mitchell Field planning process, and *you* will decide the future of Mitchell Field. The key to this exciting planning process is public involvement. There are many ways to get involved and make your voice heard. Come to one of the public forums, visit [www.harpswell.maine.gov](http://www.harpswell.maine.gov) and click on the Mitchell Field link for public comment, or call/write Town staff for more information.

To ensure that planning for the site would not happen in a piecemeal fashion, but rather by an inclusive public process, the Selectmen established the Mitchell Field Committee. The Mission of the Committee is to develop a comprehensive master plan for the short- and long-term uses of the Mitchell Field parcel. To that end, the Town hired a consultant (through a combination of funding sources including grant monies, cash donations and town resources), Holt and Lachman Architects, to hold public meetings where citizens can explore uses for the site while considering existing, as well as, possible future conditions. The Master Plan for the site will be created from this public participation process.

The Master Plan process will consist of three public forums and a Community Design Workshop. The forums are two-hour evening meetings, and the Design Workshop is a Sunday afternoon event.

- ☐ Forum 1 (Information, Education and Discussion)  
June 6, 6:30-8:30 PM, Harpswell Islands School.
- ☐ Forum 2 (Hopes and Aspirations)  
June 26, 6:30-8:30 PM, Harpswell Islands School.
- ☐ Community Design Workshop pre-registration requested, not required\*  
July 15, 12 – 5:30 PM, Harpswell Islands School.  
(Lunch to be served from 11am to noon.)
- ☐ Forum 3 (Follow-up Review of Workshop)  
July 31, 6:30-8:30 PM, Harpswell Islands School.

\* Please visit the Town's website or contact the Town Planner to pre-register for the Design Workshop. This will help us plan for the amount of food and other supplies that we will need to prepare.

If you cannot attend these meetings, send in your thoughts to the Mitchell Field Committee or Town Planner Jay Chace. **Your ideas are extremely important!** Become engaged and join us to share your vision for Mitchell Field or just come to share in the food and festivities.

***The following Pipeline Easement Advisory Committee Report was inadvertently omitted from the 2006 Annual Town Report.***

### **Pipeline Easement Advisory Committee**

When the former fuel depot (now Mitchell Field) was turned over to the Town in 2001 the pipeline that runs to the Brunswick Naval Air Station was an unresolved issue. Responding to the 2006 Town Meeting sentiment of returning pipeline easements to property owners without incurring liability for the Town, the Pipeline Easement Advisory Committee was established. Its mission is to:

- explore options for returning pipeline easements directly from Navy to property owners,
- facilitate the exchange of information with respect to pipeline easement issues,
- make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen about the disposition of the pipeline easements, and
- identify potential concerns related to ownership of the pipes themselves.

The Committee set to work in June. It acquired background information and technical and historical data, developed a preferred approach and on September 21, 2006 the Selectmen and the Committee hosted a public meeting at the West Harpswell School. At that meeting the Committee presented a summary of its work and the communications the Town has had with the Navy and our Congressional delegation regarding disposition of the pipeline easements and the two pipes traversing the right of way.

The pipes are wrapped with an asbestos-laden material. Left undisturbed they represent no problem. However, the pipes are shallow, the right of way is eroded or overgrown in many places and, over time, the pipes have the potential to become exposed creating a possible public safety hazard. The Committee urges the removal of the pipes by the Navy as the only way to eliminate liability and safety concerns. The Selectmen agree. There was overwhelming support at the public meeting for pressing the Navy to remove the pipes at their expense, relinquish the easements and restore the land. There was also strong sentiment to request our Congressional delegation to intercede with the Navy on our behalf.

The Committee received an encouraging response from the Navy regarding removal of the pipes. The Navy is considering conducting an engineering evaluation of the pipeline. This would be a first step in determining the feasibility of removing the pipes along the right-of-way. At this time the Committee is told the Navy is waiting funding for the engineering evaluation. The Committee will keep Harpswell informed as events unfold.

March 2007 Update: The Town recently received a copy of written communication from the Navy to the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) in which the Navy requests removal of the pipeline by DLA. A response from DLA is expected within several weeks.

April 2007 Update: DLA has informed our congressional delegation that it has requested a proposal for the pipeline right-of-way survey and engineering cost estimate for removal. Following receipt of response, DLA will be in a position to award the task order and approve the contract. DLA expects a 2-3 month contracting effort for the pipeline right-of-way survey. The DLA Program Management Office (PMO) is coordinating with the Naval Operational Logistics Support Center – Petroleum, to establish a priority for the project. This is a high priority action for DLA.

**Referendum Voting on June 12, 2007 at All Three Voting Locations from 9:00am – 8:00pm**

- **Harpswell Neck Voters, Merriconeag Grange**
- **Orr's and Bailey Island Voters, Orr's Island Community Building**
- **Great Island Voters, Cundy's Harbor Community Building**

**Municipal:** On June 12, Harpswell voters will be asked to consider an amendment to the Harpswell Sign Ordinance that would allow civic and religious organizations to erect four 24- by 30-inch signs in areas outside the right of way that are less than 33-feet from the centerline. This proposal is consistent with state law.

**School:** The annual M.S.A.D. # 75 school budget will be voted on June 12.

**State:** There will two State bond issues on the June 12 ballot as follows:

- Question 1: Do you favor a \$112,975,000 bond issue for improvements to highways and bridges, airports, public transit facilities, ferry and port facilities including port and harbor structures and bicycle and pedestrian trails that makes the State eligible for over \$260,525,000 in federal and other matching funds?
- Question 2: Do you favor an \$18,300,000 bond issue to support drinking water programs and to support the construction of wastewater treatment facilities that will leverage \$49,500,000 in other funds?

**Maine Residents Property Tax and Rent Refund Program**

Over 200,000 Maine households qualify for property tax and rent refunds. Many Harpswell residents who are entitled to this refund are not aware of the program or believe they do not qualify. To learn more about program qualifications or to file online please visit [www.maine.gov/revenue](http://www.maine.gov/revenue). Applications are also available at the Town Office. Anyone needing assistance with filing this application may contact the Town Office at 833-5771. Applications must be filed by May 31, 2007.

***Harpswell Bulletin***  
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